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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

CT 3112 - PROFESSIONAL SKILLS - COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Workplace Communication and Behaviour – Workplace Behaviours

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Scenario 1

"I know we've been struggling to meet our deadlines, but we can do better. I've noticed some mistakes in our work and we need to take the time to correct them. We're all in this together and we must hold ourselves to a high standard. I'm counting on all of you to step up and take responsibility for your work. If anyone needs help or guidance, please let me know. We're going to get through this, but we have to work together."



Questions

- Is there any criticism present in the speech being analyzed?
- Does this speech would make you feel belittled or demeaned in any way?



Scenario 2

"I can't believe how incompetent some of you are. I mean, honestly, how hard is it to understand basic instructions? I swear, if I have to explain it again, I'm going to lose my mind. And you, (pointing to a specific person), you're the worst of all. I don't know how you even got this job. Your work is a complete mess and you're always late. You're lucky I don't have the power to fire you on the spot. I expect better from all of you. Shape up or ship out."



Questions

- Is there any criticism present in the speech being analyzed?
- Does this speech would make you feel belittled or demeaned in any way?



Scenarios

Which scenario would you
consider a bullying episode?

Why?



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Scenarios

Scenario 1 is not considered a case of bullying because:

- The speaker is addressing a problem with the team's work
- The speaker is not belittling or demeaning
- The speaker is encouraging teamwork offering help and guidance.

This is a constructive feedback. Constructive criticism is an important part of the work process, as it helps to identify areas of improvement

Scenario 2 is considered a case of bullying because:

- The speaker is belittling and demeaning team members
- The speaker is intimidating a specific person
- The speaker is making threats

These actions are considered bullying and create a negative work environment.



Bullying

Definition:

Repeated, inappropriate behaviour direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could be reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work



What can be considered bullying?

- Slagging off, demeaning remarks
- Being ignored, isolated or excluded



Direct: open attacks on the victim

Indirect bullying: subtle, spreading of rumours, social isolation, intentional exclusion



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Indirect bullying

- Managers that consistently gives credit to some team members' ideas and successes, but repeatedly excludes other team members during meetings and presentations.
- Managers that frequently interrupts or talks over the team member when they are speaking
- Managers that make some team members to feel invisible
- Colleagues that consistently makes sarcastic or passive-aggressive comments to a specific team member, undermining their work and making them feel belittled.



Inappropriate behavior in the workplace:

Sexual Harrassment



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Sexual Harrassment

Scenario 1

A female employee is working late on a project, and a male colleague comes by her office and starts making small talk. During the conversation, he makes comments about her appearance, and touches her arm or shoulder. The colleague also starts to drop by her office more frequently and starts to make more personal and flirtatious comments. The employee has made it clear that she is not interested in these advances, but the colleague continues with the behaviour.



Sexual Harrassment

Scenario 2

Two colleagues of the opposite sex are working on a project together and have a lot of interaction in and out of the office. They know each other for a long time and there is some exchange of jokes and banter. They also, occasionally, tease each other in a playful manner.



Scenarios

Which scenario would you
consider a case of sexual harassment?



Scenarios

Scenario 1 **is sexual** harassment:

- The colleague's behaviour is unwanted
- Creates a hostile work environment
- The employee is being subjected to unwanted sexual attention
- She is made to feel uncomfortable and intimidated

Scenario 2 **is NOT** sexual harassment:

- The behaviour is not unwanted
- The behaviour is not offensive or intimidating
- There is not unwanted sexual attention
- Both parties are comfortable with the interaction

sexual harassment is a serious issue, and it should be taken seriously. At the same time, false accusations of sexual harassment can be just as damaging and should be avoided.



Harassment

Definition

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine (9) discriminatory grounds

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Age
- Race
- Religious beliefs
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Membership of the travelling community



Sexual Harassment

Any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature:

- It is a form of discrimination on the gender ground
- Criminal offence
- Burden of proof

Covered under the: Employment Equality Act of 1998 and Equality Act of 2004



Harassment and Sexual harassment

Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person

- Acts
- Requests
- Spoken words
- Gestures
- Production/display/circulation of written words, emails, text messages, pictures or other material



Harassment and Sexual Harassment

It is the impact of the conduct, not the intention of the perpetrator which is at issue



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Harassment vs. Bullying

- **Harassment** refers to behaviour that is motivated by a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristic.
- **Bullying**, on the other hand, refers to repeated aggressive behaviour that is intended to harm or intimidate someone who is perceived as being weaker or more vulnerable. It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social. Bullying can happen in any setting, including at school, at work, or online. While bullying is not always illegal, it is still considered unacceptable behaviour and can lead to disciplinary action in some cases.



Building a positive and respectful relationship

- Communicate clearly and effectively
- Show respect for others
- Be a team player
- Avoid gossip and spreading rumors



Building a positive and respectful relationship

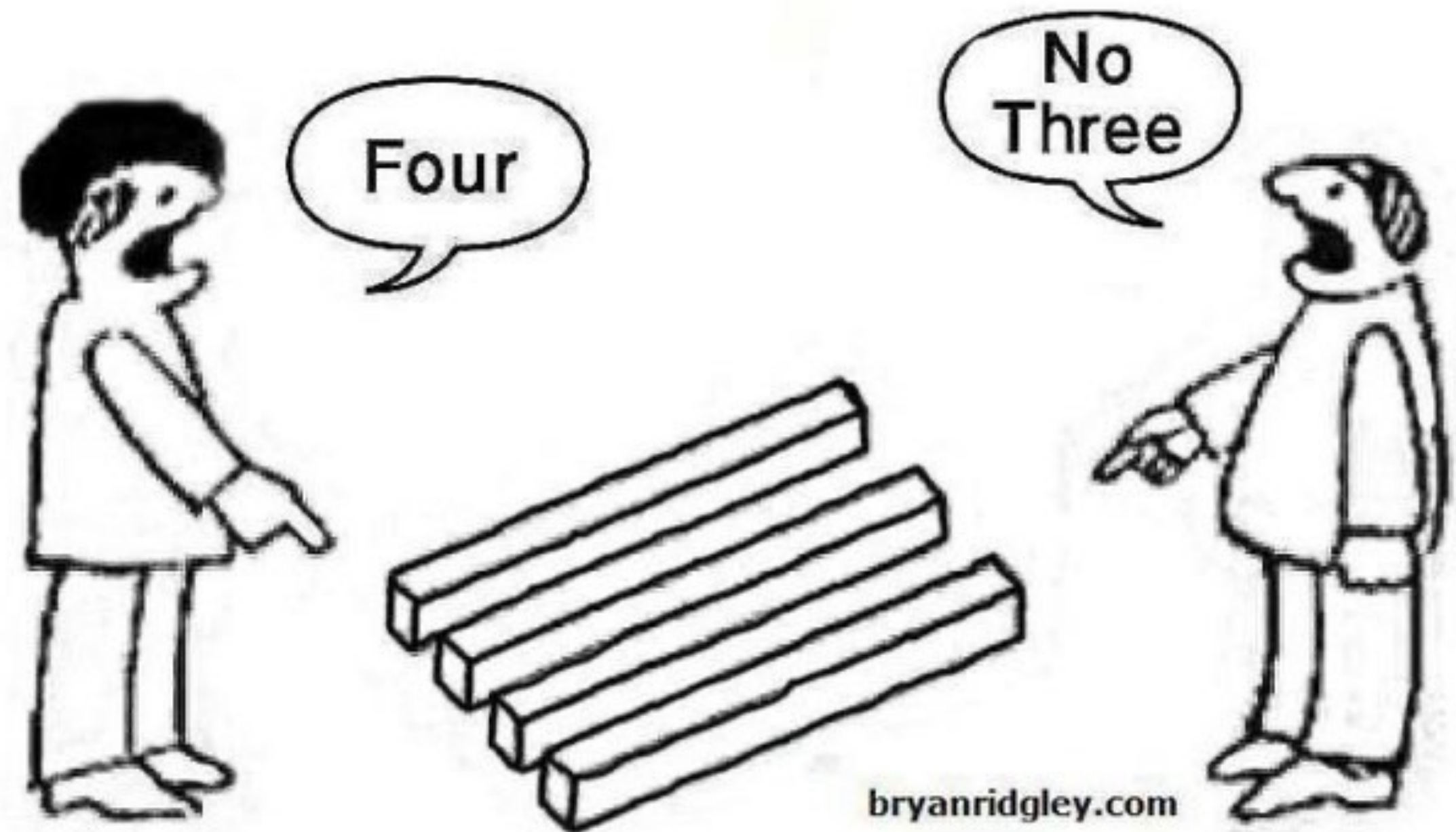
- Do not engage in any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying.
- Maintain a professional attitude
- Show gratitude
- Seek help if you feel uncomfortable or unsupported



Perceptions

- Cultural background
- Personal experiences
- Individual values

Reality can be so complex that equally valid observations from differing perspectives can appear to be contradictory.



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Thank you

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